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❖THE❖OLD❖TESTAMENT❖STUDENT.❖

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WE GIVE our readers in this number the conclusion of the Symposium on "Bible-study in the Theological Seminaries." The opinions here expressed are no less interesting and no less worthy of consideration than those published in the previous number. If we may judge from the expression of opinion upon this subject made orally, in letters, and in print, we may confidently feel that the opening up of the discussion was not untimely. It is difficult, of course, when in ruts, to get out again; yet it is always possible. Our ministers need a practical and comprehensive knowledge of their hand-book, the Bible. Let us see that they have it.

THOSE interested in Semitic and oriental studies will be pleased to learn that besides Summer Schools, there are also to be Winter Schools where an opportunity is furnished for the study of the Semitic languages, including Hebrew, Arabic and Assyrian. This new departure—for the *Summer* School of Hebrew is now a thing of some age (six years)—is taken by Prof. Paul Haupt, of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. In January of 1887 he will conduct a four week's School in which *he* will give instruction in Assyrio-Babylonian and Sumero-Akkadian, while two of the Fellows of the University will give instruction in Hebrew. Men have learned that four weeks spent in the continuous study of one subject accomplishes much more than was generally supposed. We trust that this Winter School may be a most successful one.

THERE is danger, it must freely be granted, that we may make a serious mistake in reference to Bible-study. We *may* spend so much time in breaking the shell, that no time will be left for extracting the meat. Not a few students have a weak spot in this direction. There

is not a geographical or historical allusion which they cannot, in the case of a given verse, explain. The exact meaning of every word is known, the force of every construction worked out. They have learned, too, the historical stand-point, and the relation of this verse to that which precedes and that which follows. One would naturally think that, with all this known, little could remain. But it is not so. All this is the shell. He who stops here has missed practically everything. The very thing wanted is not obtained. The *thought*, the underlying meaning is not grasped. Now all this preliminary work is necessary, absolutely necessary ; but it is far from sufficient. It would only require a slight additional effort to get that which is of supreme value. It is just like the preparation of a task for recitation. One man spends an hour and fifty minutes ; he has really mastered the lesson ; but the finishing touch has not been given, and it is recited poorly and soon forgotten. Another man spends ten additional minutes. He fastens it firmly in his mind, recites it satisfactorily and, what is of more value, holds it when the recitation is a thing of the past. That extra ten minutes was of more practical value than the preceding hour and fifty minutes. Let us remember this. It is a false economy to stop when our work is almost finished, and lose what is really the great thing desired. The meaning of these wonderful expressions, the principles which they contain must be learned, and to confuse them with the geography, the history, the grammar of the passage, is a sad mistake. It is the thing dressed, not the dress, which is of vital importance.

NINE-TENTHS of theological controversy arises from a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the terms employed. Could the principal technical terms have been assigned a specific signification and have been used strictly in accordance with this signification, thousands of volumes need not have been written, hundreds of men need not have been born. It has been a question in the minds of many of the readers of the STUDENT, whether *all* of the contributors to the symposium in the April number understood alike, or, at any rate, used alike the terms "Higher Criticism" and "Biblical Theology." It has been suggested by some eminent scholars that in the symposium the former term was by several used synonymously for "rationalistic criticism," and that the latter was not really distinguished by some from "Systematic Theology." This is a matter for the writers themselves to consider. We take this opportunity of reproducing a note from the STUDENT of April, 1884, in reference to Higher Criticism. There are some points which, however sharply put, fail to impress them-

selves ; and the exact meaning of the term Higher Criticism seems to be one of them :

“ Biblical Criticism is that branch of historical criticism which deals with the biblical books as literary productions. It may be divided into two great branches, Textual Criticism and Higher Criticism. Textual Criticism is that science which seeks to establish the exact text of the biblical writings as they left the hands of their authors. This is done by a careful comparison of MSS., versions and citations from subsequent authors. Higher Criticism sets out from the results of Textual Criticism and enquires as to the authenticity (authority), genuineness (relating to the proof or disproof of alleged authorship), sources and character of the several books of the Bible. It asks and seeks to answer such questions as these : Is the writing so attested that we can rely upon its statements ? Is the author candid, trustworthy ? What are the materials from which he drew, and are they reliable ? Who is the author or authors ? What is the time, place, occasion of composition ? Was the nature of his work *revision* or original composition ? What literary form has this work assumed ? It is very plain that the nature of the reply which scholars give to these questions cannot constitute them Higher Critics, or the reverse. Higher Criticism is to be distinguished from Textual (Lower) Criticism, and if the name *Lower* had been applied to the introductory science, confusion would not have arisen in regard to the one appropriately designating the advanced science. A Delitzsch, or a Green, or a Bissell, who seeks to answer the above questions, is a Higher Critic ; so is a Wellhausen, or a Smith, or else a scholar who is conducting such investigations cannot be placed at all until he has reached his conclusions ; and, then, from the point of view of such scholars as attach a stigma to the term, he is to be called a Higher Critic, should he have departed in his conclusions from conservative views ; while with those who deny the right of Wellhausen and his school to the name Higher Critic, our enquirer would be excluded from the class. The confusion on both sides is removed by making the term refer, not to the results, and not altogether to the methods, but to the character of the questions, which the critic of all beyond the mere text proposes.”

It may not be amiss also to reproduce from Oehler, the definition of Old Testament Theology, or Biblical Theology, so far as concerns the Old Testament :—

“ The theology of the Old Testament, the first main division of Biblical Theology, is *the historical exhibition of the development of the religion contained in the canonical books of the Old Testament*. As a *historical science*, Biblical Theology is distinguished from the *systematic* statement of biblical doctrine by this, that while the latter investigates the unity of divine truth, as seen in the *whole course* of revelation, and the aggregate of its manifestations, the former has the task of exhibiting the religion of the Bible, according to its *progressive development* and the *variety of the forms in which it appears*. The theology of the Old Testament has therefore to follow the *gradual progress* by which the Old Testament revelation advanced to the completion of salvation in Christ ; and to bring into view from all sides the *forms in which, under the Old Covenant*, the communion between God and man found expression. Now, since the Old Testament revelation did not present itself simply in words and as a divine testimony concerning doctrine, but was made in a connected course of divine deeds and institutions, and on the basis of these produced a peculiarly shaped religious life ; and further, since all knowledge derived from revelation is not given independently of the facts of the history of salvation and the divinely instituted rules of life, but develops itself in continual connection with them ; it follows that the theology of the Old Testament cannot limit itself to the directly didactic matter in the Old Testament. It must embrace the essential factors of the history of the divine kingdom in the Old Covenant : its task is, in short, the *exhibition of the whole of the Old Testament dispensation*.”